

Second, in the medium term, we have to reauthorize—we have to approve—ongoing work for highways, roads, and bridges, and we need to have a reauthorization for surface transportation by this fall. The Chair and ranking member of the relevant committee—BARBARA BOXER of California and DAVE VITTER of Louisiana—have shown, as has my senior Senator TOM CARPER from Delaware, who also serves on this committee, that Federal infrastructure investment is a bipartisan value. They have been able to come out of that committee with bipartisan reauthorizations a number of times over the last couple of years, and that is encouraging to me.

We also, a few minutes ago, came out of the transportation subcommittee markup on appropriations, the committee that says: Here is how much we will spend. That came out with a very strong bipartisan vote earlier today and will come to the floor in the next few months. This progress is encouraging, but it doesn't mean anything if we don't have a way to pay the bill when the bill comes due. We need to figure out how to finance infrastructure for the long term in this country.

There are several bills with good ideas that have been put forward in this committee and in this Chamber. I have supported two bills. One is called the BRIDGE Act and the other is called the Partnership to Build America Act. These bills will provide the critical steps we need to bring private sector money in off the sidelines and facilitate a real partnership between government money and private sector money. These bills have been led by Senators WARNER, BLUNT, and BENNET, are genuinely bipartisan, and enjoy support from groups who often don't work well together—from industry to labor, from the AFL-CIO to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.

There are several strong bipartisan bills that show the way forward, but we don't seem to be able to get them to the floor, get them approved, and get them moving forward.

Right now, the truth is that the debate on this floor comes nowhere close to matching the reality of the scope of the problems in front of us. As I mentioned earlier, we have an enormous infrastructure debt. By 2020—in just the next 6 years—it is estimated that our Nation will need \$3.6 trillion of new infrastructure investment so we can fix and maintain our roads, bridges, rail, transit, drinking water, ports, sewers, wastewater treatment, and beyond. This is an enormous debt which is unpaid and for which we currently have no path forward.

I know many of us who serve on the Budget Committee and pay attention to the balance sheet of our country are concerned about our structural national debt. I wanted to take a minute today—on a day when everyone in my hometown and home State is concerned about how we will tackle the problem

of the I-495 bridge—and remind all of my colleagues of the scale of this national infrastructure debt.

At the heart of this problem and at the heart of so many of the problems we have is our unwillingness to pay for what we want, to pay the bill that is long overdue for our long-overdue improvements to the infrastructure of this great country.

Fixing this problem is going to take a great deal of revenue. We can reform taxes, we can involve the private sector, we can reprioritize funding, and we can reform the way government works. We don't lack for innovative ideas, but at the end of the day what we currently lack is our will.

The people of the United States, through us, need to step up to the challenge of paying the bill. In my hometown, just in the last few hours and over the last few days, we have become more engaged in this debate than we have been in a long time because a bridge that is critical, a vital artery for our community, has stopped. It is closed indefinitely. We need to work together to find the resources to fix this bridge and get America moving together again. It is my hope and plea that my colleagues will step up to this challenge, which I know every community in our country faces.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

D-DAY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as all of us know, tomorrow, June 6, marks the 70th anniversary of the Normandy landings, which we have come to know as D-day. D-day, of course, was the greatest military operation in history—one that brought together 150,000 troops, 5,000 ships, and 13,000 aircraft in a sweeping attack on Nazi-occupied France and marked the beginning of the end for Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich. The Allied Powers, of course, united as one and changed the course of history. It was our troops and our allies who freed a continent from the clutches of tyranny and our troops who helped win a war.

As a country, it is important that we recall occasions such as the 70th anniversary of the Normandy invasion and D-day because the greatest danger is that we forget—we forget about the face of evil and what it means to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—but it also means we need to remind ourselves on a regular basis about the heroism and courage and sacrifice of the people who gave all they had, including their lives, in order to preserve for us what we now have and what we too often take for granted.

We often hear that freedom is not free, and, of course, we all agree with that, but it almost has become a cliché, and it should not be. When we think about our freedom, we ought to think about those men who stormed

the beaches at Normandy, many of whom lost their lives. We must always remember those who fought in places such as Iwo Jima and ran into a buzz saw of enemy fire, many of whom never came back. We need to remember those important events on a day such as this, and we need to tell the story not only to remind ourselves, but we also need to tell the story to our children and grandchildren because they will, before long, have a responsibility for preserving this great experiment we have had in America for over 230 years—a self-governing democracy that has been purchased by the blood and the treasure of those who have gone on before. The free world as we know it owes its existence to the courage, grit, and sacrifice of those who fought in places like Normandy, and, of course, they will not be forgotten.

For me personally, I can't help but think about Normandy—which my wife and I had an opportunity to visit a few years ago—without thinking of my father-in-law, who landed on Utah Beach on the second day of the Normandy invasion. He said that after the first day it was much easier to get on the beach, but the effort to clear out the German Army and the hedgerows was murderous work and very dangerous. Thankfully, he came home, like so many, as part of the “greatest generation” that helped to build America into the powerhouse we are today.

My father-in-law passed away recently at the age of 96 and lived a long and rewarding life. But I can't let the occasion pass without remembering him as one of those brave men who stormed the beaches at Normandy 70 years ago.

Of course, there is another chilling number when we think about World War II. Fifty million people lost their lives during World War II. It was the bloodiest conflict in the history of the world—50 million people.

During World War II, of course, we recall that brutal dictators and totalitarian ideologies threatened the very existence of the civilized world, and we are reminded of people like Adolf Hitler and what he did and what other countries did in response either by way of appeasement or by way of challenging his aggression. And then we know about the war, of course, following the Pearl Harbor attack in Hawaii. America had to fight wars on two fronts—one in Asia and the other in Europe.

When the United States crossed the Atlantic and joined its allies on the beach of Normandy, the rescue of Europe had begun. History tells us that the weather and conditions that day were harsh. In fact, one soldier described the battle as everything going wrong from the beginning. Without a doubt, they knew what awaited them there, and they were not deterred.

You might wonder, as I have from time to time, what it took for our men and women in uniform to charge a beach occupied by the German military

in France. What could have inspired the kind of courage we have seen?

Well, I had occasion to read a book a few years ago, as perhaps other colleagues have, written by James McPherson. It is called "For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War." When you learn about the brutality of the Civil War and how many people lost their lives and, indeed, the likelihood of losing your life—being tragically injured, acquiring an infection, and then losing your life in some of the most painful and horrendous ways you can imagine—it was instructive for me to realize not only did they fight for our country, but they fought for each other as well, which, of course, is the lesson of all wars—fighting for a cause and fighting for each other.

Undeniably, much of the success on D-day was the result of a great strategy and plan by American war planners, including a man born in Denison, TX, by the name of Dwight David Eisenhower, who served as the Supreme Allied Commander.

I see my colleague from Kansas on the floor, and I know Kansas lays claim to Dwight D. Eisenhower, but I want to state here on the floor of the Senate that he was born in Denison, TX, and not in Kansas, although we are proud to share his legacy between both of our States and as a country.

General Eisenhower's address to the troops on the eve of the landing stands as one of the most memorable exhortations to bravery in the face of evil in the annals of world history. I would like to take a moment to read some of those words.

Here is what General Eisenhower wrote:

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force! You are about to embark on a great crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty loving people everywhere march with you.

He continued:

The free men of the world are marching together to victory! I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory!

At a different time, Eisenhower once said: "Morale is the single most important factor in successful wars." Morale was what united the Allied Powers—not the desire to conquer real estate but the desire to defeat the tyrants of Europe, to liberate the prisoners of war and those in concentration camps, and to forever defeat the evil ideology that motivated Adolf Hitler and his ilk.

We know the world we live in is always filled with great uncertainty and, unfortunately, with evil men and those who would smash democracy and self-government under the boot heel of dictators and tyrants. So while we always pray fervently for peace, we must also be ready to defeat tyrants, dictators, and those who would crush democracy under their boot heel. D-day reminds

us that the United States can and should always stand with our friends against terror and tyranny.

Back home in Texas, we have another reminder of this day. For the first time since the war, the battle flag that was raised above the USS Texas as it entered the waters off Point du Hoc on June 6, 1944, is now on public display at the Houston Museum of Natural Science in honor of D-day's 70th anniversary. Crewman Emil Saul, who was aboard the USS Texas, preserved the flag for 48 years and gave it to the museum in 1992. Now possessing the space and conditions to properly exhibit the flag, the museum has made this flag public for the first time in honor of the 70th anniversary of D-day. This flag, of course, symbolizes the valor our troops demonstrated that day and makes sure future generations will never, ever forget their sacrifices.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, thank you.

I certainly appreciate the remarks of my colleague, the Senator from Texas, in regard to honoring those who served our country so nobly and so courageously 70 years ago, as we recognize this weekend the anniversary of that invasion of Europe, called D-day.

We have many veterans in our country, many military men and women who continue to serve and many who now are veterans and have served in the past, and I am here today to pay tribute not only to those D-day military men and women and those who served our country on such a special occasion in which the course of history was changed, but also to pay tribute to all of those who served our country in all circumstances.

I am not a veteran. I have great regard for those who are. My life is shaped by the fact that the Vietnam war was ongoing during my days as a high school student, and much of my time was spent talking to those a few years older than I who were volunteering or who were drafted, and those who were a little bit older than that who returned home after service in Vietnam. I clearly remember as a 16- or 17-year-old watching the evening news, "CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite," and every day the news was consumed with reports from Vietnam, the consequences we found ourselves in, and the sacrifice men and women were making on that battlefield every day.

Again, I didn't serve in Vietnam, but I learned a couple of things from my time observing our country and seeing the sacrifice and service of those who were willing to serve in that war. One of the things I take from that experience is we will always honor, care for, respect those who serve our country in the military in whatever circumstance they have been called to do that.

It was a month ago that I was on the floor on this spot, concerned about the

Department of Veterans Affairs and the way our veterans are currently being treated. I asked for a dramatic step of the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to submit his resignation and for President Obama to accept it. As I indicated a month ago, that was the first and only time as a Senator that I ever asked a Cabinet Secretary to depart his or her position—and I didn't do it lightly—but what had transpired, and what has transpired over a period of time, is a Department of Veterans Affairs that many veterans no longer believe is capable of caring for them. In fact, what was so discouraging and disappointing to me was the number of veterans, men and women who served our country, who had lost faith, who had lost hope in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

That Department was created in 1930 for purposes of providing the benefits and health care supporting those who were called to duty, those who responded to their country's call. I certainly know that throughout the course of history the Department of Veterans Affairs has had its challenges, but what seems so compelling to me over the last several years is the sense that no longer was there a plan, no longer was there the effort to make certain that Department lived up to its commitment to those who previously served our country.

A lot has transpired in the last month, and there is now an Acting Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. And of course we have reports from across the country of secret lists, concerns about waiting times, and the potential of service men and women, veterans, who have suffered as a result of those lists, as a result of having to wait. I guess we will know more about that over the course of time.

I am surprised and disappointed to learn that Kansas hospitals, Kansas facilities, the VA hospital in Wichita is on that list where investigations are now ongoing and where the Department of Veterans Affairs has admitted to a list that delayed access to health care. I would not have expected that in our State. I think we are different. We are special. But the reality is this challenge and the problems we face are systemwide and across the country. What we want is a Department of Veterans Affairs that is worthy of the sacrifice and service of the men and women who served in our military. We don't want damage control from the Department of Veterans Affairs. What we want is the end of damage to those who served our country.

The purpose of my conversation on the floor today is to make certain we don't lose sight. The news cycle comes and goes, and while there are serious issues our country faces in many facets, I don't want this Senate to lose sight of its responsibility to make certain the Department of Veterans Affairs is caring for those who need our care and treatment.

I am worried, and I hope my worries are unfounded. I have only served in

the Senate for 4 years. I have been frustrated by being a Member of the Senate. I came here to work on behalf of Americans, on behalf of Kansans. My plea is—my plea is to the Democratic leaders, to Republican leaders, to individual Senators, whatever party they are: Let's not follow the path we have followed so many times in the short period of time I have been here in which there is a Republican plan to fix a problem and there is a Democratic plan to fix a problem. Surely our veterans deserve something more than each of us being able to say we cast a vote for their benefit. Surely they deserve the opportunity to actually have legislation that will address the challenges and problems the Department of Veterans Affairs has. My plea and my request of all in this body is, for these veterans, to make certain we conduct ourselves in a different way than unfortunately I have seen in most instances as a Senator.

We have this phrase around here, "Well, we will get a side-by-side," meaning there is a Democratic plan and a Republican plan; and when you talk about that. What that means is we never expect either one of those plans to pass. So to the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, to Senator REID, the majority leader of the Senate: Please take us down a path that demonstrates once again the Senate can rise to the occasion and do something worthy of the veterans who have served our country.

Every once in a while in this frustration about the way this place doesn't work, I will put on my running shoes and I will walk down to the Lincoln Memorial. It certainly is an inspiring visit to the Lincoln Memorial, but perhaps more importantly on that walk you now go by the World War II Memorial that memorializes those the Senator from Texas was talking about. You then walk by the Vietnam Wall, the war that was ongoing in my teenage years. On your way back you come by the Korean War Memorial, the forgotten war. What I am reminded of and what I would call to the attention of my colleagues is not a person recognized in any of those memorials volunteered or was drafted for purposes of advancing the cause of the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. There was no interest in partisan politics by those who served our country. They served their country because they believed in a higher calling. They believed they could make a difference. They believed it mattered to their kids and grandkids. It was about freedom and liberty. It wasn't about who scores points in the next election.

Please, leaders of the Senate, all of my colleagues, make certain we rise to the occasion, that we have the same standard, the same motivation, the same reason that we come here every day to be the same as theirs: to make America a better place, to make sure our kids and grandkids live with free-

dom and liberty, to make sure the American dream is alive and well. If there is an issue that we ought to be able to do that, an issue perhaps different than anything else we deal with, surely we have the ability as a Senate to deal with the issues necessary legislatively to resolve and address the problems of the Department of Veterans Affairs and to make certain that every veteran who has served our country has the ability to access quality health care provided in a timely fashion, and that once again the Senate doesn't do what it has done too many times, and that is we all cast a vote and we can claim we have done something, we supported something, but the end result is that nothing happened. Let's avoid nothing happening.

Finally, let me conclude by saying that World War II Memorial is special to me. I have a 98-year-old father home in Plainville, KS, a World War II veteran. I walked up to the World War II Memorial 10 years ago, just a few days before it was being dedicated, and I wanted to see what it was going to look like. It was an inspiring moment. I happened to have my cell phone with me and I walked over to the Kansas pillar and thought about those who served our country in that war, including my dad back home. I walked away from the memorial and used my cell phone to call my dad at home. The message I delivered to my dad that day was: "Dad, I am at the World War II Memorial. It is a memorial built for you. Dad, I want you to know that I thank you for your service. I respect you and I love you."

That conversation, fortunately, took place on an answering machine and not in person, and was easier to deliver, although a few minutes later my cell phone rang and it was my dad, who said, "Gerald, you left me a message, but I couldn't understand it. Could you tell me again?"

The point I want to make is, we are called upon as American citizens and certainly as members of the Senate to do all that is possible to demonstrate that we thank our veterans for their service, we respect them, and we love them. The Senate needs to rise to the occasion and not let the partisan politics of this place and this country divide us in a way in which we only symbolically respond but the end result is that we fail those who served, and we fail our veterans who depend upon us just as we have depended upon them for their service to our country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

BURWELL NOMINATION

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to speak on behalf of Sylvia Mathews Burwell. We have had a lot of commentary out here that she has shown her capability in her time as the head of the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, and she is going to have a

similar success now in the Department of Health and Human Services. We are going to be voting on her just before 2:00 this afternoon, and I am certainly looking forward to what is going to be a resounding vote. I think it is because most people feel she has done an excellent job at OMB.

In this Senator's experience with her, discussing with her one of the smaller agencies of government, where this Senator felt as though OMB had targeted that little agency, instead of allowing the experts who were driving that agency—and specifically I am talking about NASA—purely from a finance and budgetary standpoint, instead of what we wanted to accomplish in the Nation's space program, Ms. Burwell understood that, and she tried to help out from an agency that is more concerned just with budgetary aspects of government, and she understood you have got to get into what you want the agency to accomplish instead of just looking at the budgetary aspects. I appreciated that very much. I think we are going to have a similar kind of experience at HHS with Ms. Burwell.

Now, goodness gracious, she takes over an agency that certainly has its hands full, as we are, for example, just trying to continue to expand Medicaid and expand it to all of the people in the States that have denied the expansion of Medicaid. So what we asked during the confirmation hearings is that she consider working with the States to find some types of compromises on a way to do that—to expand Medicaid—when the States are balking. Twenty-four States have not taken the Federal Government up on the offer to pay the full cost of expansion for the first 3 years, and then after the year 2020 the Federal Government will pay 90 percent of the cost of expansion.

I offer an example in my own State of Florida. The State of Florida, ostensibly because they did not want to incur the 10-percent cost of Medicaid expansion after the year 2020—that was the reason they gave, but it really wasn't the real reason they didn't want to expand; they just didn't want to have anything to do with the Affordable Care Act. Many of them labeled it "ObamaCare." As a result, what they have done in Florida is denied a population of over 1 million people—specifically 1.2 million people in Florida—the availability of health care by expanding the eligibility for all Medicaid up to the level of 138 percent of poverty. That level is for a family of four—\$32,500 a year.

A person thinks of a million people—over a million who otherwise could get health care—and they are making \$32,000 or less, we can't expect them to buy health insurance if they are only bringing in \$32,000 for a family of four. That is not reasonable. That is why we expanded Medicaid in the Affordable Care Act. But politics has a way of getting in the way, and there are 24 States that did not expand.